

STAFF PROFILE:
DR. MIKE LOOMIS

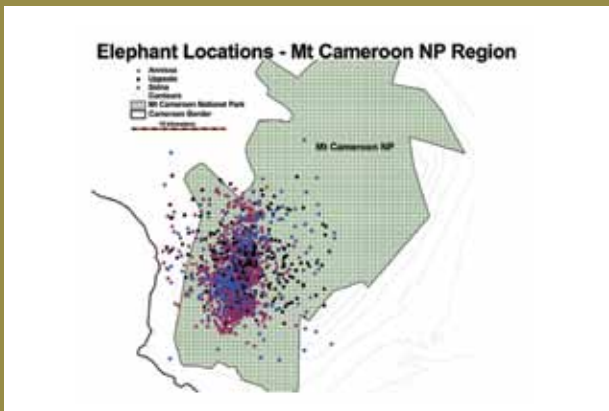


Dr. Mike Loomis is the Chief Veterinarian at the North Carolina Zoo and oversees the division that provides all veterinary medical care for the Zoo's animal collections. Mike graduated from the University of California, Davis College of Veterinary Medicine and received a master's degree in zoology from Indiana University. Mike's career has included work as a veterinarian at both the Los Angeles and San Diego Zoos as well as the NC Zoo. He is past president of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians and of the American College of Zoological Medicine. He is also an Adjunct Associate Professor of Zoological Medicine at North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Mike began work on the Cameroon elephant tracking project in 1998 in order to find ways that humans and elephants could live together more harmoniously.



Elephants are closely monitored during field anesthesia.

able to deploy only two collars. The first was deployed on Mt. Cameroon, an active volcano just off Cameroon's coast. The second was placed on an elephant in the Dja Biosphere Reserve in southern Cameroon. This was the first elephant collar deployed in this remote rainforest reserve. The Dja Reserve is very important because it is adjacent to several other protected areas which collectively form a large forest block spanning three international borders. We are trying to identify elephant movement corridors across this area for future conservation planning.



Each point on the map represents a location transmitted by a collared elephant.

Even though we only collared two elephants during this period, the information they have provided has been valuable for elephant conservation. Data from the elephant on Mount Cameroon, along with data from two other collars we placed previously, were instrumental in defining the final boundaries of the newly created Mt. Cameroon National Park. In addition, the team has collected data which indicate that the elephant population on Mt. Cameroon may be divided into two separate populations separated by deep alleys which elephants cannot cross.

The Elephant Tracking Project Helps NC Zoo Win an Exhibit Award

In 2009, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums presented a significant achievement award to the NC Zoo for its Watani Grasslands exhibit. The award was based in part on the significant role that information on the elephant tracking project plays in the exhibit. This is a great example of how the NC Zoo's Field Conservation Program feeds back into the zoo itself.

